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**Statement submitted by Legião da Boa Vontade, a
non-governmental organization in consultative status with
the Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

We, from the *Legião da Boa Vontade*/Legion of Good Will, submit our recommendations to the theme of the 2017 session of the High-level Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council — “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges.” These proposals are based on the extensive work we have undertaken in the areas of education and social assistance for 67 years by means of a network that operates 94 units in seven countries. In 2016 alone, we provided almost 15 million acts of service to benefit people living in poverty in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Portugal, the United States of America, and Uruguay.

Our emphasis is on the economic empowerment of future generations. The world of work is and will be even more impacted by globalization, new demographic trends, and convergence of digital, physical, and biological technology. Economists have called the sum of these changes the Fourth Industrial Revolution. All these factors are affecting human relationships on various levels. Careers and jobs will be created, but many will disappear or evolve to become something very different.

We believe that education plays a prominent role in this new scenario. That is why the Pedagogy of Affection (for children up to 10 years old) and the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy (for those who are 11 and over) provide our educators with the tools needed to empower students in such a way that they can face the challenging reality of this century. These pedagogies comprise the educational proposal devised by educator José de Paiva Netto, President of the organization.

This proposal suggests that the complete development of individuals should combine “Brain and Heart,” in other words, guarantee that learning not only considers reasoning, but also strengthens feelings and emotions of the students, by integrating cognitive aspects and the values of Ecumenical Spirituality. The MAPREI (Learning Method through Rational-Emotional-Intuitive Research), our educational methodology, enables students to be the main protagonists in the learning process. This method takes into account the challenges of the job market, which demands professionals who are multi-skilled, enterprising, and cooperative.

Another topic worked on by the organization’s educators is the resilience capacity of the students, which is essential in an increasingly competitive society. To deal with pressure, young people need to understand their emotions, control their reaction to each one of them, and their impact on the people they live and interact with personally and professionally. That is why resilience is a topic that is commonly discussed in several subjects in the school syllabus or dealt with as a central topic in Ecumenical Culture and Living Together classes, which were specially created by our educational network. Our schools and social service centers develop programs and activities that simulate challenging situations of daily life in order to stimulate the search for solutions to them. This kind of approach, which is mediated by the teachers, has provided young people with greater confidence in their choices.

The book *É Urgente Reeducar!* [It is Urgent to Re-educate!] (2010), written by José de Paiva Netto, contains the principles of our educational proposal. Among them, we highlight one he presented in 1999, during an impromptu speech to the organization’s educators: “The Spirit has a predominant place in our everyday actions. However, in the preparation of youths and adults for their subsistence in this material world of technologies never seen before — and, paradoxically, in these days, so unstable for those who work hard for their own future — we must take into

the highest account that students must be efficiently qualified for the strict demands of the current competitive job market. Moreover: prepare them in such a way that they do not pursue a path where the profession for which they have been prepared for no longer exists at the end of the course. Therefore, it is essential that they receive an effective education in order to be bold and enterprising, so that they can overcome the supervenient facts that, at any moment, may challenge society, frightening multitudes. For argumentative purposes, bold plans will be of no avail if there is no one who has been properly prepared to develop them."

Job Lab

Most of our students come from low-income homes, whose family members have little schooling and live in a socially vulnerable situation. These factors make it difficult and even hinder the parents and legal guardians of the students from offering them greater support when making their academic choice. Therefore, the school presents to them different technical schools and colleges. They are also encouraged to apply for several colleges, thus increasing the range of opportunities open to them for continuing with their studies and thus having more job opportunities.

High school students in the Good Will Educational Complex in São Paulo, Brazil responded to a survey on the skills they have developed that meet the needs of the trends of the future of work. We present below the perception of the students aged between 16 and 19, with regard to how our educational proposal helped them continue with their studies and find a career:

- 93% affirmed that their career choice has to have a meaning, in other words, in addition to being able to provide for themselves, they want to help improve the quality of life of other people through their work.
- 100% stated that the classroom debates prepared them for dealing better with the relevant topics of the present day, among which looking after the environment, the future of work, the search for Peace, and gender equality.
- 79% said they already know which career they will pursue (a higher percentage than that indicated in similar surveys with students from public and private schools in Brazil).

Here are some of our actions that facilitate access to jobs of the future that require creativity and innovation, or that are linked to the environmental area, to quality of life, or to sustainability:

- Professional/vocational guidance: with the use of neurolinguistics, the aim is to help in the search for self-knowledge and in awakening students' potential.
- Visits to universities: the young people are given a guided tour around colleges and talk to other students and professors of the courses they are interested in.
- Job fair: the school welcomes universities and university preparatory schools.
- Workshops and talks given by professionals who perform at a high level.
- Entrepreneurship and sustainability: debates with children and teenagers on relevant topics, such as aging of population and its social and economic implications. The debates foster youth leadership based on ethics and citizenship, and encourage transforming attitudes.
- English immersion experience: being fluent in this language is an important requirement in looking for a job position.
- Preparing for the university entrance exams and for the National High School Exam.

- o University entrance exams with the family, counting on the participation of someone who is responsible for the student.
- o Reading the classics of Brazilian and Portuguese literature.
- o Simulation exercises of various selection processes.
- o Special training for better posture: prepares the students for the long hours of these exams.
- o Motivational workshops.

Education against inequality

The research carried out by the former student of Legion of Good Will and educator Karen Reis Ribeiro, in her second undergraduate course, was one of the works presented at the 30th World Congress of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics (IALP), held in Dublin, Ireland, in August 2016. The research was undertaken in the Good Will Educational Complex for her degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the School of Medical Sciences of the Santa Casa in São Paulo, entitled "Identification of communication disorders in elementary school students."

The findings surprised the examining committee because, despite the difficult reality of most of the students, the school had communication disorder indices that were similar to those found in populations in developed countries. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), communication disorder is an impairment in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal, and graphic symbol systems. Individuals may demonstrate one or any combination of them.

The results suggest that the educational proposal of the Legion of Good Will directly contributes to the students' good performance. For Dr. Noemi Takiuchi, Adjunct Professor at the Speech-Language Pathology program at the School of Medical Sciences of the Santa Casa in São Paulo and Karen's final paper supervisor, this research is singular. "When we reviewed the [academic] literature, we saw that when children come from an underprivileged social background, this has an enormous impact on their language and reading development. This was the opposite of what we found in the Legion of Good Will. There we saw children with few resources but good performances. ... In the Organization we have the ideal scenario for studying both the risk factors and the protective factors. We found several aspects that are considered in the LGW's proposal that act as protective factors. So some of the children who might otherwise develop some type of difficulty [have the possibility of not developing them] because they're exposed to the Organization's unique teaching and reading methods, as well as [being able to count on] the family working with the children, participating a lot in the activities, and even having access to special activities, as for example music, computer classes, physical education, and good food, [because] all this works as a protective factor," she affirms.

The good practices described in this statement, based on spiritual, ethical, and ecumenical values, empower children, adolescents, young people, adults, and the elderly, encouraging them to help build a truly fair and solidary society, and prove the concepts defended by the organization's president since 1986: "Nothing is better than believing and investing in the divine potential of human beings. When reason is united with the heart (sentiment), fraternal solutions provide life with the longed-for happiness, which can only be true when there is both material and spiritual food on everyone's plates. We never get tired of stating: we were born on Earth to live in society, a Solidary, Altruistic, and Ecumenical Society; therefore, one that is

sustainable ... The human being, with his/her Eternal Spirit, is the center of the Economy, the generator of all progress. Without him/her, there is neither work nor capital. We need to finally move further ahead and say that the Eternal Spirit that lives in our human body really is the measure of everything, because it is a Heavenly Citizen.

"The wealth of a country lies in the hearts of its people. Nevertheless, entire nations still suffer misery. It should be remembered that empty stomachs and frustrated spirits are generally unwilling to listen."